L: Cunningham G-3 (1846-47) 1854 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

the great number of very short women; but I am inclined to attribute it partly to the system of polyandry which prevails among them. This system is, I believe, almost universal amongst the mixed race of Kanetis throughout Kanawar and the other Kaneti districts, but as far as I could learn it is not so prevalent amongst the pure Botis of Ladák. The custom has therefore most probably been borrowed from the polyandrous Hindu race of Himálayan Kshatriyas, amongst whom it has been preserved for at least twenty-five centuries, since the Pandavan brothers jointly espoused the princess Draupadi.

The great differences observable in the stature of the Musalmán races of Shigar on the north and of Skardo on the south, must no doubt be attributed to the mixture of other races; of the diminutive Kirghiz of Pamer with the first, and of the tall Kashmiri with the second. The people of Shigar were once, I believe, pure Kirghiz.

In general the Botis have short, squat, stout figures, with broad, flat, ugly faces; but occasionally amongst the better classes I have seen both men and women who were well made and well featured, and with a fine rosy colour in their cheeks. Indeed, I have even seen a few of the women that were really handsome, with good regular features and fine figures. But in general they are all, both men and women, not only ugly but hideous, and more especially the old women. Dr. Gerard's amusing description of these people is too graphic to be omitted.* "In figure they are stout, waddling, and dumpy; * * * in face they are not beautiful, even when young; when past their climacteric, very unseemly; and when old, a picture of horrid ugliness.

* Asiatic Researches, XVIII. p. 249.

/Following page 32/

291
145

Tibetan children

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

minutes or so he was at the waterfall below us, making camp and starting a small fire with the *dama* bush which he rooted up with his hands from the canyon wall.

In another ten minutes a woman turned the bend on the trail and shortly joined the man. She too had a pack; and after resting a moment she untied it, pulled out a kettle and some food, got water from the cliff, and started supper. In perhaps a half hour another woman appeared far down the trail. She was long in coming, for she stopped every fifty feet or so and rested. She too had a pack, and as she got nearer I noticed that it pressed heavily on her. When she rested she sat on the high bank bordering the trail, leaned forward, shifting the weight of the pack, and rested her head on her hands.

Before the second lady reached the waterfall, another man appeared far down the trail; and when these two joined the other couple, I went down for a visit.

Tibetans usually look younger than they are. To me the two men appeared to be in their late thirties or early forties. The younger woman, short and stocky with a square, pleasant face, looked thirty-four. The other lady, who had lost many of her teeth and had a deeply wrinkled face toughened by sun and storm, was well over seventy. She wore heavy trousers and a skirt which was part of a black wool dress with long sleeves. These clothes were heavy, for they served not only as protection against the weather, but as night clothes too. She had a moccasin-type shoe made of sheepskin, and over her shoulders she wore a shawl of the same material, which protected her back from the rain and served as a pillow or covering at night. It was the only blanket she had. To this point the old lady and the young one were dressed alike. But the old lady, unlike the younger one, had a distinctive headdress known as the *perakh*. A *perakh* is a piece of leather six or eight inches wide and about two feet long that is worn on the head. It runs from the forehead down the back of the neck to the shoulders. It is inlaid with stones, usually jade and turquoise. The

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

years they charged four annas (five cents); now their uniform rate is one rupee (twenty cents). [548]

Leh barely keeps alive. The demands of its native population bring some life to the markets. But Leh will shrink to a tiny village on that volume of trade. To date it has been saved by its Indian Army garrison, whose purchasing power keeps the ancient city alive. But once that artificial stimulant is removed, Leh will shrivel. There are projects for development of Ladakh. It is found, for example, that drug herbs grow well there and have an extraordinarily high alkaloid content. Kashmir is promoting the use of Ladakh for growing drug herbs on a commercial scale. Unless Kashmir undertakes a bold economic and social program in Ladakh, Leh will soon become as much a relic of the past as the gaunt and empty castle of the King that looks down on the old capital of Little Tibet.

The people of Leh do not seem to know the worries of which I speak. They have little; they expect no more; they are happy with their lot. They are friendly and cheerful, simple and uncomplicated. I stayed with them and came to know their simple faith. The deities of the passes, of the rivers, of the valleys are real to them. So are their fears and superstitions. They are gentle people, and poor beyond belief, held closely to their faith by stern lamas.

The beautiful women in Leh are the young ones in their teens or twenties. A woman, by the time she is thirty, has usually faded. She carries the work of the house, the weight of the children, the burden of the fields. By forty she is old, with no buoyancy left. But the young lady knows the gaiety of hope, the laughter of dreams. Such a girl was Zila. She wore a chic sheepskin over her shoulders, the fur side under. The fleece had been washed and combed and made to spray out along the edges of the garment and over her shoulders. These streamers of wool against Zila's dark dress, like her beautiful teeth against her dark lips, gave her a rare beauty.

I met Zila at the Moravian Mission at Leh, a mission estab-

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

The parents and the unmarried sisters go to live in the *k'hang-gu* or small house (which may be either a small part of the large house, or a separate one on the family land, or even lodgings in some one else's house if a *k'hang-gu* cannot be afforded by the family), while the eldest son or daughter takes over the major portion of the household which is called the *K'hang-chen*.

The reason for doing things in this way is, I was told by Joseph Gergan on the 6th October 1938, that bride and mother-in-law unless separated, are sure to quarrel. A Tibetan proverb says:

P'ha gNyen-bo sGo rGyap-la
Ma gNyen-bo Gog sBugs-la

which means:

"The father's relations are behind the door
The mother's relations are right inside the hearth."

Or, in other words, that the relations of the husband(s) should be turned out, while the wife's relations can always be sure of a warm welcome in in the home – that is in a *bag-ma* household; in a *mag-pa* one this naturally does not apply.

Reasons for the existence of this special custom, valid for both *bag-ma* and *mag-pa* marriage, have been given as the fact that the parents are getting old (after fifty, Ladakis, like Tibetans, age very quickly), and that, for this reason, they can no longer assume responsibility for the cultivation of the land, nor continue to bear the burden of the recurring festivals, etc. So they go into the *k'hang-gu* where they have no obligations any more, and leave their newly wedded children to shoulder the charges which go with possession of the *k'hang-chen*.

The *k'hang-gu* consists of a smaller house, standing generally on the land of the *k'hang-chen*, and of the fields called *To-zhing* (*lTo-zhing*), "food-field", necessary for the maintenance of the persons who live in it. No charges or dues are collected from the *k'hang-gu* by the Kashmir State, and those who live in it do so absolutely freely. The portion of the father or fathers is called *p'ha-skal* (*P'ha-skal*), and that of the mother *ma-skal* (*Ma-skal*), for such division between parents is observed. Unmarried sisters live on the *p'ha-skal*.

The fields of the *k'hang-gu* can be cultivated by the inhabitants of the *k'hang-chen*; this saves trouble for the old folk. But if no such labour is forthcoming, then the *ma-skal* will be cultivated by the relatives of the mother, while the fathers and the unmarried sisters will look after the *p'ha'skal*.

Apart from land to be tilled, there are some animals in the *k'hang-gu*

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir [illegible]

W. Tibetans AJ4

142 few are over five feet in height, and they appear to be compact,
291 but this is not too easy to decide since the men wear very thick long-sleeved cloaks or chogas—much like dressing gowns tied round the waist with a leather girdle—loose trousers tucked in
291 felt gaiters and boots; usually they wear woollen caps with ear flaps and their oiled, black pig-tail of hair hangs behind. The women wear long gowns like coat-frocks with full skirts, sheepskin chogas and cloth caps which have ear flaps standing out. The best clothes kept for gala holidays have the head dress made of velvet, trimmed with fur edging and ornamented with large corals, turquoise and silver; their frocks are bright with trimmings of brilliant braids and scarves which tie in front—all the cloth is home spun; their "furs" consist of a short, gaily coloured cape trimmed on its edge with long, silken goat hair.

142 The younger women are quite good-looking, the skin is tight
145 on their faces, and they have a fresh bloom upon their high cheek bones. None know their age, so that it is difficult to judge if they age rapidly or normally, though I have seen many mothers who looked old enough to be grandmothers and long past childbearing, with children tied to their backs. When once
302 the skin slackens it rapidly becomes wrinkled and dark. It seems that they use as a cosmetic the bright yellow juice of a berry, which also acts as an astringent. I do not believe they ever wash it off; when it wears a bit they apply another coat.

563 The population consists of two communities, the Ladakhis
233 proper and the Champas or nomads; there is no intermarriage between them. The Champas are the shepherds; they take their flocks of sheep and herds of goats to the upland valleys where they live in tents, very rarely does one become a monk; it is they with their wool who supply the principal commercial export
563 product of the country. The Ladakhis are mostly engaged in
241 agricultural pursuits, each family having its tiny portion of land. These people are poor by modern standards, living a simple life in a country which has not yet heard of the modern
[231] inventions and progress of the outside world. They plough the land with an animal called a zho, an ever-grunting beast which is a cross between a yak and a cow, the land being watered
241 either by the river or by canal water. They grow barley, wheat, buckwheat, beans, peas and rape seed, and at the greater heights